

## THE GLORIOUS GOD THE FATHER

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In our meetings, we come together on Sunday mornings to remember the Lord Jesus at the breaking of bread meeting. We marvel at His love and sacrifice for us and His willingness to go to the Cross for the sins of many. We thrill at such verses as He gave His life for His friends (John 15. 13) and He who knew no sin was made sin for us (1 Peter 2.22 ff).

We also read that even now the Lord Jesus makes intercession for us (Hebrews 7.25) and that one day He will present us to God the Father with exceeding joy (Jude 24)..

That the Lord Jesus still makes intercession for us ties up with 1 John 1.9 where we read of the advocacy of Lord Jesus, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In all of our concentration on the Lord Jesus, we may unintentionally overlook the work of God the Father. We read that God the Father so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3.16).

When the Lord was dying on the Cross, God hid His face... not because He did not care or was not interested, but because He could not look at sin. But we read that now God has highly exalted the Lord Jesus and given Him a name above every name and that, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow (Philippians 2. 9 ff). The Father said of the Lord, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3. 17 etc.) and some versions say, This is my beloved Son in whom is my delight. The Lord addressed the Father and said, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my Father (Hebrews 10.9).

We break bread since the bread is the symbol of Christ's body although Psalm 22 and John 19 does not say that His body was broken. We drink the wine which is a symbol of the shed blood of Christ. They are only symbols and likened by some to visual aids.

But we read the no man cometh to the Father except by Him, the Lord Jesus

(John 14.6) who is the mediator between God (the Father) and man (1 Timothy 2.5). The Father was made known to us by the Lord Jesus (John 14.6).

We must not forget the love that the Father has for His Son (John 3.35) and the Lord reminds us that the Father sent Him (John 6.57). God's gift of love to us is the Lord Jesus. We read of God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the new relationship, My Father and your Father

There are names for God in the Bible such as

Elohim, the Divine, the strong One (Genesis 1.1)

Adonai, Lord indicating a master-servant relationship (Exodus 4. 10 and 13)

El Elyon, the Most High, the strong one (Genesis 14.20)

El Roi, the Strong One who sees all (Genesis 16.13)

El Shaddai, Almighty God (Genesis 17. 1)

El Olam, everlasting God (Isaiah 40. 28)

Yahweh, Lord, I am. Jehovah (Exodus 3. 13 and 14)

God the Father is omnipotent.

He is eternal, having no beginning or end (Deuteronomy 33.21, 1 Timothy 1.17)

He is reliable, unchangeable and trustworthy (Numbers 23.19, Malachi 3.6 etc.)

He is incomparable (2 Samuel 7.22, Psalm 86.8, Isaiah 40. 25, Matthew 5.48)

He is able to deliver (Daniel 3.17) as in the case of Shadrac, Meshach and Abednego

He makes grace abound to make all things sufficient (2 Corinthians 9.8)

He is able to do exceedingly above all that we ask and think (Ephesians 3.20)

He is able to subdue all things (Philippians 3. 21)

He guards the soul's treasure and enables us (2 Timothy 1.12)

He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him (Hebrews 7.25)

He is able to keep us from falling (Jude 24)

God the Father is compassionate and merciful.

Micah 7 verse 18 and 19 is addressed to the Jews of course, but the character of God surely applies to all who are true to Him. The verses read :

Who is a god like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance ; He retained not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us ; He will subdue our iniquities and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

God the Father is incomparable to anyone or anything and we must not make comparisons of the Divine with other people or events.

Isaiah 40. 18 reads, To whom will ye liken God ? Or what likeness will ye compare with Him?

It is a real grief that many Christians, even evangelical ones, do compare the Father and the Son with others. If we read this verse correctly, we must not make comparisons as it could demean or belittle God Himself.

We have already made references to God being incomparable in 2 Samuel 7.22, Psalm 86.8, Isaiah 40.25 and Matthew 5. 48. A friend of mine, who is a Jewish Christian, was thrown out of a church because he objected to Solomon being compared to God the Father or the Lord Jesus.

Sadly, I seem to have upset some Christians with these particular remarks but this is what the Bible says.

There are so many other references to the Father. Here are some :

He is the Father of the fatherless and the judge for the widows (Psalm 68. 5)

He is the potter and we are the clay; we are the work of His hands (Isaiah 64.5)

He dwells in Heaven (Matthew 6.9)

He is the giver of good gifts (Matthew 7.11)

He adopts as sons and daughters all believers (Romans 8.15)

He takes account of our works (1 Peter 1.17)

He is the father of all men in that we are His handiwork (Deuteronomy 32.6, Matthew 23. 9 etc.)

It is God who has made us and not we ourselves (Psalm 100.3)

He is the creator of the universe (Genesis 1.1) and the human race (Genesis 1. 26). He created all species of life.

He is moral and good as testified by the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). The first of the commandments declare God as the only god and that image of Him are not allowed and no other gods should be served or worshipped. The names of God must not be taken as swear words or blasphemy which is rife today. He is the God of mercy and forgiveness.

Although it applies to Jews in keeping the Sabbath day holy and without doing unnecessary work, Christians have taken the day of resurrection, that is to say Sunday, to be our holy day. Older Christians used to refer to Sunday as the Lord's Day.

We are to honour our parents and be aware of what they have done for us. Of course, there are those who have uncaring parents.

Murder is in breach of the next commandment. Does this also refer to suicide and euthanasia? It does not include legitimate war when we respond to aggression and bellicosity.

The Bible has a lot to say about adultery and sexual sins. Homosexuality is condemned (Romans 1.27 etc.) as is seeing the nakedness of anyone to whom you are not married (Leviticus 18).

Stealing is outlawed and is coveting something that others have and you do not. But is not only stealing property and items but someone reputation by slander, libel and gossip which is the subject of the next commandment which is that we must not bear false witness. Lies, defamation, slander and libel is absolutely forbidden. Even some Christians fail in this matter and are inconsiderate to fellow believers on some matters although we have the right to discern correct doctrine and combat false doctrine.

It is amazing that many famous people who were not Christians, and some who were atheists, agree that the Ten Commandments are an excellent model for life.

God is the God of justice.

Because He is righteous, He executes judgment for all that are oppressed (Psalm 103. 6)

The Lord does not commit any iniquity ; every morning His judgment is brought to life ; He faileth not but the unjust know no shame (Zephaniah 3.5)

The judgment of God is according to truth (Romans 2.2)

There is the anger of God. He hates sin. Sin is anything that is disobedience to God and is also called iniquity, transgression and lawlessness. The soul that sinneth it shall die (Ezekiel 18.20). The wages of sin is death (Romans 6. 23) whereas the gift of God to all who repent and come to faith in Christ is salvation and eternal life.

People have complained that God is unfair and cruel in that when the children of Israel entered the Promised Land of Canaan they fought and killed many of the inhabitants, but what is not understood is that these peoples were decidedly evil. It has been said that their killing was not butchery but surgery.

There is a general point to make here. God is God. He can do whatever

He wills. Notwithstanding this, He is the God of love, mercy and forgiveness and is not willing that any should perish but that all may come to a knowledge of all the truth (2 Peter 3. 9). He does not want anyone to go to hell but, rather, that everyone is saved. He cannot be criticised or condemned for that.

But the people of Canaan had, as a religion and dominant life style, a debasing form of paganism specifically in the fertility cults with its disgusting sexual perversions. They had a pantheon of gods with the inactive father god, El. The chief deity was Baal. Female deities included Asherah and goddesses were sacred courtesans, that is to say prostitutes, and therefore social life was full of illicit sex and depravity with sacred prostitutes, homosexuality and various orgiastic rites. It was the sort of religion and life style that no decent person with a good conscience would accept. There were also human sacrifices including that of children were passed through the fire to Moloch and perished. Any religion or national life that practised this is cruel, evil and worthy of condemnation.

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